

My wife does not complain.  
I am writing this afterword  
to you.

My daughter plays hopscotch  
in the Tuilleries.  
Later I sail a boat in the fountain  
where fish take bread from my hands.

So warm I think of you  
today and the girls on Rue de la Paix  
show their first spring dresses.

Today I will look only  
at Matisse  
and perhaps Renoir who sd  
painting would be nothing  
without the breasts of women.

In the end death comes  
as a friend.

#### The Disciples of Camus

"there is but one serious philosophic problem, and  
that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not  
worth living amounts to answering the fundamental  
question of philosophy."

#### -- Camus: Myth of Sisyphus

Arnold Kaufman loved Camus.  
In his great black overcoat  
he trod all over Montparnasse  
threatening the world with suicide.  
"I will fling myself  
from the top of metaphysics  
to fall on the stones of Zeno."  
His girl friend Jeanne  
bought him wine  
kept his socks mended  
worked as a waitress in the Rue Pigalle.  
In winter he debated with the Maoists  
again threatening with his life.  
"If you say THAT  
I will kill myself in the middle of the Louvre  
before David's painting of Marat."  
Then he drew a pen knife from his briefcase  
and cut off his right eyebrow.  
Ah, he waved Kafka at them and Thomas Mann.  
They waved their little red books.



It was a standoff thru February  
till one day his friends carried  
the body of Jeanne all the way back  
from Notre Dame  
from whence she had jumped in silence.

It took all the wind out of his  
arguments.

### Three Poets in the Dark

at Neuilly  
one with a blue pipe  
reciting Po Chi-I  
the others drinking white  
wine in chipped glasses  
with the aromatic  
smoke encircling them

three poets  
in a winter bar  
the snow piled up on the banks of the Seine  
in blue heaps  
speaking tonight of the Fauvists  
and the Chinese  
poets

Oh who would have these three  
but Paris? -- two Americans  
one North  
Vietnamese

each having fled in terror  
from the extremes of wealth and order  
each without an  
audience  
in this city of art  
happy in poverty  
three in a room on squalid  
Rue St. Jacques

"They will pick at our things years from now,  
collecting our pneumatics and post cards," says the  
man with the blue pipe. "They will buy up  
our shirts and manuscripts and call us a  
movement," says the Vietnamese. "Who will survive  
to explain? Not me."

"I'll try," says the younger American eating  
almonds. They are solemn for a moment  
then burst into laughter. In the Metro cold  
touches their throats;